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NRC ISSUES SAFETY EVALUATION REPORT FOR PROPOSED GAS CENTRIFUGE ENRICHMENT PLANT IN OHIO

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has issued its Safety Evaluation Report for the American Centrifuge Plant, proposed to be built in Piketon, Ohio. The report concludes that the plant, as described, would operate safely and would not pose an undue risk to the health and safety of workers or the public.

USEC Inc. submitted its license application for the American Centrifuge Plant on Aug. 23, 2004. USEC proposes to use a design based on gas centrifuge technology developed by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to enrich uranium for use in fuel for commercial nuclear power reactors. The plant is to be built at DOE's Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant site in Piketon.

The Safety Evaluation Report documents the NRC staff's review and safety and safeguards evaluation of USEC's application. The review evaluates the facility's potential adverse impacts on worker and public health and safety, under both normal operating and accident conditions. The review also considers physical protection of special nuclear material and classified matter, material control and accounting of special nuclear material, as well as the management organization, administrative programs and financial qualifications provided to ensure the facility's safe design and operation.

The Safety Evaluation Report is the second of two major reports in the NRC staff's review of USEC's license application. An Environmental Impact Statement (NUREG-1834) was published in April. That study concluded that there would be no significant adverse impacts that would preclude granting a license.

The license review process is scheduled for completion in February, following an adjudicatory hearing by the Atomic Safety & Licensing Board.

The Safety Evaluation Report (NUREG-1851) will be available soon on the NRC Web site at this address: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/>.

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